United Nations ESCAP/CICTSTI/2018/5

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
1 June 2018

Original: English

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation

Second session
Bangkok, 29–31 August 2018
Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Policy issues for information and communications technology: regional capacity-building on information and communications technology for development

Report of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development on its activities during the period 2016-2018

Summary

Established in June 2006 as a regional institute of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development assists member States in building their human and institutional capacities to use information and communications technology (ICT) for sustainable development. The Centre implements training programmes for policymakers, students and youth, and women entrepreneurs and facilitates the sharing of knowledge and experiences on ICT human capacity development.

The present document contains a report on the activities undertaken by the Centre since the first session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation, which was held in Bangkok from 5 to 7 October 2016.

The Committee is invited to take note of the report.

I. Introduction

1. Established in June 2006 as a regional institute of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development has a mandate to assist member States in strengthening their human and institutional capacities to use information and communications technology (ICT) for sustainable development.

2. The Centre implements flagship training programmes for policymakers, students and youth, and women entrepreneurs. It provides platforms for knowledge-sharing on ICT for development, produces knowledge resources to foster the exchange of good practices and lessons learned, and advocates ICT human capacity development in international dialogues and conferences.

* ESCAP/CICTSTI/2018/L.1.

Please recycle

3. The Centre's programme of work contributes to subprogramme 5, on ICT and disaster risk reduction and management: specifically, under the 2016–2017 strategic framework, it contributes to expected accomplishment (c), on strengthened capacity of member States to apply ICT, space applications and disaster risk reduction strategies and management for inclusive, equitable, sustainable and resilient development; and, under the 2018–2019 strategic framework, to expected accomplishment (c), on strengthened capacity of member States to use ICT, space technology applications and disaster risk reduction and management for resilient and sustainable development.

4. The Centre's Governing Council reviews the administration, financial status and implementation of its programme of work and provides strategic advice on future programmes and activities. The Council is composed of representatives of eight member States and a representative nominated by the host country, the Republic of Korea. At the seventy-first session of the Commission, in 2015, the following countries were elected as members of the Council for the period 2015–2018: Bangladesh; Cambodia; India; Indonesia; Pakistan; Philippines; Sri Lanka; and Thailand.

II. Activities undertaken since the first session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation

5. Since the first session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation, which was held in Bangkok from 5 to 7 October 2016, the Centre has continued to enhance its capacity-building programmes, expand its reach in the region and facilitate knowledge-sharing on the role of ICT in achieving inclusive and sustainable development.

6. Recognizing that ICT is a development enabler that cuts across all sectors, the Centre has been strengthening efforts to integrate its work into the regional priorities and subprogrammes of ESCAP. It cooperates with ESCAP divisions and subregional offices and draws on their expertise in programme development and delivery.

A. Training

7. Training is at the heart of the work of the Centre. The Centre adheres to a flagship-programme approach to ensure greater focus on its training activities. It is currently implementing three flagship training programmes: the Women ICT Frontier Initiative, the Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders and the Primer Series on ICT for Development for Youth.

1. Women ICT Frontier Initiative

8. Since the first session of the Committee, the Centre has intensified implementation of the Women ICT Frontier Initiative, a flagship ICT capacity development programme for promoting women entrepreneurship, which was launched by the Centre in June 2016.

9. A core imperative of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the global commitment to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. Gender is a cross-cutting issue that is mainstreamed into all Sustainable Development Goals and targets. Member States are called to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Goal 5) and to

enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular ICT, to promote the empowerment of women (Goal target 5.b).

10. Through the Women ICT Frontier Initiative, the Centre endeavours to empower women socially and economically through ICT-enabled entrepreneurship. It aims to strengthen the capacity of women entrepreneurs in Asia and the Pacific to use ICT in support of their businesses and the capacity of policymakers to create an enabling environment for ICT-empowered women entrepreneurs.

11. A series of national and subregional launches for the Women ICT Frontier Initiative has been held by the Centre, in close partnership with ICT and gender ministries, civil service institutions, training organizations, civil society and women's associations, and other stakeholders. Over the reporting period, the following national and subregional launches were held:

(a) In Sri Lanka, the national launch was held in Colombo on 26 September 2016, in partnership with the Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka and the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs. For its initial roll-out, the programme is targeting female heads of household in post-conflict Sri Lanka. A training-of-trainers course was held in Colombo on 27 and 28 September, followed by community workshops in Badulla and Kilinochchi districts, which were severely affected by the country's civil war.

(b) In Cambodia, the launch was held in Phnom Penh on 21 December 2016, in partnership with the secretariat of the One Village One Product National Committee and the Ministry of Women's Affairs. It was preceded by a three-day training-of-trainers course, from 19 to 21 December 2016, that helped to expand the pool of local resource persons who can deliver the training in the country. The programme is being brought to the country's provinces in partnership with the One Village One Product National Committee, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, and women entrepreneurs associations.

(c) In Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia, the Centre launched the programme in Bishkek on 27 April 2017, in cooperation with the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Central Asian Research and Education Network. The event was followed by a subregional training-of-trainers course for women entrepreneurs and policymakers from Central Asian countries.

(d) In Bangladesh, in cooperation with the ICT Division of the Government of Bangladesh and the Bangladesh Computer Council, the programme was launched in Dhaka on 5 July 2017. The Government adopted the programme in line with its national ICT strategy, Digital Bangladesh, whose aim is to transform the country into a modern and inclusive knowledge-based society by 2021, not only through the development of countrywide ICT infrastructure but also through ICT human resource development. The ICT Division aims to provide ICT and entrepreneurship training to 30,000 women entrepreneurs in the country.

(e) In the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Philippines, the ASEAN launch was held on 28 August 2017, in conjunction with the ASEAN Women's Business Conference, which took place in Manila from 28 August to 1 September 2017. The Action Agenda on Mainstreaming Women's Economic Empowerment was adopted by the conference, calling for all stakeholders to support the implementation of the Women ICT Frontier Initiative in ASEAN member States. In collaboration

with the ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs Network, the Philippine Commission on Women, and the Department of Information and Communications Technology and Department of Trade and Industry of the Philippines, a training-of-trainers course for policymakers and women entrepreneurs was organized on 29 and 30 August 2017. A Philippine stakeholders group meeting was held on 30 August to discuss mainstreaming strategies for national implementation of the programme.

(f) In Armenia, the Centre launched the programme at Yerevan State University in Yerevan on 29 September 2017 in cooperation with the Civil Service Council of the Republic of Armenia, the Public Administration Academy, Yerevan State University and the Armenian Young Women's Association. Prior to the launch, a training-of-trainers course was held for policymakers and women entrepreneurs, from 26 to 28 September 2017.

(g) In India, the Centre launched the programme in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, on 19 February 2018, in partnership with Sri Padmavati Mahila Visvavidyalayam (Women's University). A training-of-trainers course was held from 20 to 22 February 2018, followed by a stakeholders group meeting that focused on how to link the programme to the State government's initiatives on promoting innovation and entrepreneurship culture.

2. Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders

12. Launched in 2008 as the Centre's first flagship training programme, the Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders is aimed at strengthening the capacities of policymakers and civil servants to leverage ICT in national development strategies and programmes. The programme has been utilized in 35 countries by subregional and national partners from ICT ministries, civil service organizations, civil society and academia.

13. The Academy consists of 11 training modules, covering a range of topics on ICT for development: Linkage between ICT Applications and Meaningful Development (module 1); ICT for Development Policy, Process and Governance (module 2); eGovernment Applications (module 3); ICT Trends for Government Leaders (module 4); Internet Governance (module 5); Information Security and Privacy (module 6); ICT Project Management in Theory and Practice (module 7); Options for Funding ICT for Development (module 8); ICT for Disaster Risk Management (module 9); ICT, Climate Change and Green Growth (module 10); and Social Media for Development (module 11).

14. Over the reporting period, the Centre produced a new Academy module entitled "An Overview of ICTs and Sustainable Development", which provides an introduction to the intersections between ICT and the Sustainable Development Goals. Its aim is to inform policymakers on the various dimensions and sectors in which ICT can provide support for national Governments in their sustainable development plans and programmes.

15. Given the emergence of data as important assets for Governments to make informed decisions in their socioeconomic development, the Centre has been developing a new Academy module on data-driven governance. The aim of the module is to enhance civil servants' understanding of the role of data in evidence-based policymaking and in implementing and monitoring national progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. An expert group meeting was held in Manila on 6 December 2017 to solicit feedback from experts and practitioners on a draft module, which will be finalized in late 2018.

16. The Centre conducts national-level capacity-building workshops for civil servants in cooperation with national ICT ministries and civil service training institutes. The following activities were undertaken over the reporting period:

(a) In Bhutan, the Centre conducted a capacity-building programme on social media for development in Thimphu from 28 October to 4 November 2016. Co-organized with the Ministry of Information and Communications, the five-day programme consisted of a high-level briefing session for members of the National Council of Bhutan, a one-day training session for senior-level government officials, and a two-day workshop for information and media officers on social media for development and governance and social media policy implementation. A second Academy workshop, on ICT, climate change and green growth, was held in Thimphu on 26 and 27 October 2017. The Centre collaborated with the Royal Institute of Management to organize the training, which was attended by civil servants from the National Environment Commission as well as ICT and telecommunications organizations.

(b) In Myanmar, the Union Civil Service Board has integrated the Academy into its training programme for senior government officials. It included the Academy as a core component of its executive officials management course, which is conducted annually with other international partners including the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and the European Union. Over the reporting period, four Academy workshops for executive officials were held in Myanmar:

(i) Academy workshop on eGovernment applications, Internet governance, and network and information security and privacy (Lower Myanmar, 20 to 24 February 2017);

(ii) Academy workshop on ICT and sustainable development, ICT and project management, and social media for development (Upper Myanmar, 31 July to 4 August 2017);

(iii) Academy workshop on eGovernment applications and broadband connectivity (Lower Myanmar, 6 to 10 November 2017);

(iv) Academy workshop on eGovernment Applications, and information security and privacy (Lower Myanmar, 19 to 23 March 2018).

17. Demonstrating the Academy's integration into national civil service human resource development programmes, the Centre's national partners continue to use Academy resources in civil service training. These partners include ICT ministries and civil service organizations in countries such as Armenia, Bhutan, China, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

3. Primer Series on ICT for Development for Youth

18. Launched in 2012, the Primer Series aims to sensitize society's future leaders – students and youth from colleges and universities – to the enabling role of ICT in promoting sustainable development. It consists of learning resources that can be used by institutions of higher learning and integrated into academic curricula.

19. The Centre continued to promote the Primer Series in the region through high-level briefings for officials of the relevant bodies governing

tertiary education as well as administrators and professors of colleges and universities, to inform them about the content of the Primer Series and how these resources can be utilized in classroom teaching. These high-level briefings included one in Phnom Penh on 23 December 2016 and one in Bishkek on 28 April 2017.

20. Partner institutions from colleges and universities in the region have been using the Primer Series resources in their curricula, including the following: Build Bright University (Cambodia); Institute of Information Technology Bangalore (India); International Information Technology University (Kazakhstan); Kathmandu University (Nepal); Kyrgyz State Technical University (Kyrgyzstan); Royal University of Phnom Penh (Cambodia); Satbayev University (Kazakhstan); Tashkent University of Information Technologies (Uzbekistan); Universitas Gadjah Mada (Indonesia); University of Hyderabad (India); University of Moratuwa (Sri Lanka); and University of Technology, Yadanabon Cyber City (Myanmar).

B. E-learning and knowledge-sharing platforms

1. Virtual Academy

21. The Virtual Academy – the Centre's e-learning platform – is central to Centre's strategy to diversify its training delivery channels, extend outreach and facilitate self-learning. The total number of course enrolments since the launch of the platform in 2009 has reached more than 12,330. Registered users are from 152 countries, with 34 per cent of the users from government agencies, 33 per cent from academia, 14 per cent from non-governmental organizations, 12 percent from the private sector and 7 per cent from development agencies.

22. **New online courses on ICT and women entrepreneurship**. Over the reporting period, the Centre developed online versions of the training modules for the Women ICT Frontier Initiative. These include two core modules, entitled "Women's Empowerment, Sustainable Development Goals and ICT" and "Enabling Role of ICT for Women Entrepreneurs"; two specialized modules for women entrepreneurs, entitled "Planning a Business Using ICT" and "Managing a Business Using ICT"; and one specialized module for policymakers, entitled "An Enabling Environment for Women Entrepreneurs".

23. **Migration to the consolidated United Nations online platform**. The Centre migrated the Virtual Academy to the integrated online United Nations platform managed by the Office of Information and Communications Technology of the Secretariat. This migration is expected to result in enhanced technical capacity and greater visibility, synergy with other United Nations online platforms, and improved security. New features were also introduced to enhance accessibility using mobile devices.

2. Women ICT Frontier Initiative InfoBank

24. The Women ICT Frontier Initiative InfoBank is the Centre's online knowledge-sharing platform for ICT-enabled women entrepreneurship. It houses the Centre's knowledge products, including training modules and localized contents as well as case studies on women entrepreneurs using ICT.

25. Over the reporting period, the Centre enhanced the platform with newly added sections and improved the configuration of knowledge content. New sections include content for country-specific activities, localized resources (including audiobooks), news articles, and resources related to financial

literacy programmes. Links to relevant external resources have been added to the knowledge portal.

3. eCollaborative Hub

26. The eCollaborative Hub is a repository of knowledge resources on ICT for development. The Centre is continuing to enrich the platform, which now features over 1,270 resources, including publications, reports, journal articles, working papers, training manuals and case studies. The portal had been viewed more than 394,700 times as of May 2018.

C. Advocacy and outreach

1. The Centre's website

27. The Centre's website (www.unapcict.org) is its principal channel for communicating and disseminating its capacity development programmes, resources and activities to the public. The website had generated more than 1,227,100 page views as of May 2018.

2. Advocacy on information and communications technology capacity development at international, regional and national conferences

28. The Centre continued to advocate the enabling role of ICT for sustainable development, the importance of ICT human capacity development, and its flagship programmes through presentations, keynote speeches and panel sessions at notable events, including:

(a) The Fifteenth Meeting of the ASEAN Committee on Women, Singapore, 6 October 2016;

(b) The Government 3.0 Global Forum 2016, Busan, Republic of Korea, 9 to 11 November 2016;

(c) The Korea Institute of Ocean Science and Technology International Seminar 2016, Seoul, 1 December 2016;

(d) An international symposium entitled "Promoting Women's Human Rights and Participation in Conflict-affected Settings", Seoul, 9 December 2016;

(e) The Second Central Asian Research and Education Network Regional Networking Conference, Bishkek, 26 April 2017;

(f) The Pakistan eWomen Multi-stakeholder Group Meeting, Islamabad, 2 May 2017;

(g) A workshop entitled "Rural Community Development – Women and Youth Empowerment", Seongnam, Republic of Korea, 30 May 2017;

(h) The 2017 Asia-Pacific Youth Exchange, Incheon, Republic of Korea, 13 August 2017;

(i) The "International Organizations and MICE (Meeting, Incentives, Conferences and Events) Careers Fair", Songdo, Incheon, Republic of Korea, 17 November 2017.

3. Media

29. The Centre's programmes and activities have been covered in electronic and print media from both international outlets and those of the

Republic of Korea. As of May 2018, the Centre had been featured in 754 news items: 382 features were covered by international media (news articles and radio and television coverage) and by other United Nations entities and international organizations, while 372 news items were covered by media of the Republic of Korea.

D. Strategic partnerships

30. Networking and forging partnerships at the regional, subregional and national levels are central to the Centre's capacity development strategy in Asia and the Pacific. The Centre maintains partnerships with central ministries and agencies, academic and research institutions, United Nations and international organizations, regional organizations and networks, civil society organizations, the private sector, the media, and government ministries and agencies of the host country.

E. Governing Council

31. Annual sessions of the Governing Council are held to review the administrative and financial status of the Centre, the progress of implementation of its programme of work, and the development of its annual workplan. The eleventh session of the Council was held in Bangkok on 5 and 6 October 2016, in conjunction with the first session of the Committee. The twelfth session of the Council was held in Manila on 7 December 2017.

III. Issues for consideration

32. The Committee may wish to identify priority areas and activities that could be undertaken by the Centre through its flagship programmes to support enhanced understanding and use of ICT for implementation of the 2030 Agenda

33. The Committee may wish to highlight good examples of the use of ICT for development from across Asia and the Pacific to inform the future work of the Centre.

34. The Committee may wish to identify and provide further guidance on emerging needs with respect to ICT capacity development in the region, as well as on other areas that could be undertaken by the Centre, in alignment with the 2030 Agenda.